

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **RWP Training Limited Reinspection**

**13 July 2006**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

## Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. RWP Training Limited (RWP) is a private training provider based in Carlisle. It offers apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship training in hairdressing, engineering, business administration and information and communications technology (ICT). This training is funded by Cumbria Learning and Skills Council (LSC). RWP also runs privately funded training courses in management and provides private consultancy services to local businesses. RWP was founded in 1993. It has a combined head office and training centre on the edge of Carlisle. Learners are recruited after nomination by their employer, through Connexions, or by direct application. Learners are drawn from the city of Carlisle and from surrounding towns and rural areas of north Cumbria. Most of them are employed or on work placements. They attend the training centre for off-the-job training and for some assessment. Training for engineering technical certificates is subcontracted to Carlisle College.

2. RWP is owned by two directors, who share responsibility for managing the company. They are supported by a programme co-ordinator for hairdressing and a programme manager for business administration, engineering and ICT. There are nine tutor/assessors, two internal verifiers and two administrators.

3. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 0.9 per cent in Carlisle and 0.7 per cent in Cumbria, compared with 9.1 per cent in England and Wales. In May 2006, the unemployment rate in Carlisle was 2.3 per cent and in Cumbria it was 2 per cent, compared with a national average of 2.6 per cent in England.

### GRADES

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate*

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		3
Engineering, technology & manufacturing		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Mechanical engineering</b> Apprenticeships for young people	21	3

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b><i>Business administration</i></b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	44	2	
NVQ training for young people	3	2	
<b><i>Management</i></b>			
NVQ training for young people	6	2	

<b>Hairdressing &amp; beauty therapy</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b><i>Hairdressing</i></b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	43	4	

Grades awarded at reinspection

<b>Hairdressing &amp; beauty therapy</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b><i>Hairdressing</i></b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	50	2	

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

4. This is a partial reinspection report. It covers only hairdressing and beauty therapy training, which was the only aspect of RWP's provision to be found inadequate at the time of the previous inspection. The reinspection took place in three stages. There were two monitoring visits by one inspector for one day in January 2006 and one day in May 2006, followed by a final visit by two inspectors for three days each in July 2006.

5. RWP was inspected in full in June 2005. The overall effectiveness of the provision was satisfactory. Leadership and management were good, as were its arrangements for equality of opportunity. Quality improvement was satisfactory. Training in business administration was good, training in engineering was satisfactory and training in hairdressing was inadequate. Training in ICT was not graded, owing to the small number of learners in training at the time.

6. RWP has made significant changes to its hairdressing training. In particular, staffing levels are now improved and stable. Hairdressing learners make significantly improved progress, with much better teaching. Hairdressing training is now good and RWP's overall effectiveness is now also good.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	8
Number of learners interviewed	29
Number of staff interviewed	18
Number of employers interviewed	9
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	10
Number of visits	3

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Hairdressing</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	50	2

7. There are 50 learners on hairdressing training programmes. Eleven of them are on advanced apprenticeships and 39 are on apprenticeships. Forty-eight learners are employed in hairdressing salons in Carlisle and north Cumbria. Two learners are currently attending training while seeking work in local salons. All hairdressing learners attend off-the-job training for one day every two weeks at RWP's training centre. Most assessment takes place in learners' workplaces and some at the training centre. All hairdressing training is managed by a programme co-ordinator. There are two internal verifiers and four tutor/assessors. Three employers are also qualified as work-based assessors and carry out some assessments on the learners that they employ.

### *Hairdressing*

#### *Strengths*

- significantly improving success, retention and progress rates
- good development of professional hairdressing skills
- good off-the-job training
- highly effective application of quality improvement arrangements to hairdressing

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient focus on target-setting in learners' progress reviews

### **Achievement and standards**

8. At the previous inspection, very few learners had achieved a full framework qualification. Data about achievement rates was incomplete and many learners were making slow progress. Extensive achievement-related data is now available. Success rates, retention rates and progress rates are all showing strongly improving trends. On apprenticeship programmes, timely success rates have improved from 43 per cent in 2003-04, to 53 per cent in 2004-05, and they have fully matched the overall success rate, which is also 53 per cent for 2004-05. On advanced apprenticeship programmes, the timely success rate has risen from 11 per cent in 2003-04 to 25 per cent in 2004-05. At the time of the previous inspection, there were 43 hairdressing learners in learning and 30 new recruits have since started, most in July 2005. To date, 14 of these 73 learners have already achieved the full framework and only nine have left early, most following a change of employer. Current learners are making good progress. Only three learners have gone beyond their expected end date and many have only a few outstanding assessments to complete in order to achieve their full framework qualification. Attendance rates at off-the-job training are now good, having improved significantly since the time of the

previous inspection.

9. Learners develop good professional hairdressing skills. They quickly reach commercial standards. They gain the self-confidence and expertise required to work on customers and to develop their own appointment columns of clients at early stages of their training and hairdressing careers. They make good use of the background knowledge that they learn to explain different techniques to their clients, who then make informed choices about the style and product that will suit them best. In some salons, their hairdressing skills are further enhanced by professional courses run by the manufacturers of hairdressing products and equipment. Learners' professional knowledge and awareness of how best to apply particular techniques is broadened by visits to national competitions, which RWP arranges jointly with some salons. More locally, many learners hone their skills for internal competitions arranged by RWP and judged by local salon owners.

### **The quality of provision**

10. RWP provides good off-the-job training. The overall schemes of work are very comprehensive and well structured. The off-the-job training provides well-designed progression from one session to the next, with good opportunities for learners who miss occasional sessions to catch up with the work they missed. Background knowledge sessions are well planned to provide motivation and interest and they are lively and highly participative. Lesson plans have clear objectives and include good scope for differentiated learning for learners of different abilities. The objectives are thoroughly explained to learners at the start of each session and are revisited at the end to confirm learning and understanding. Teaching rooms are well resourced to support a good range of teaching techniques and styles. All rooms have modern furniture and the accommodation provides a very supportive learning environment. Tutors now make good use of a wide range of resources, such as visual display equipment, flip charts, whiteboards, computers and interactive smartboards. Learning is checked systematically by a variety of methods, such as effective questioning, well-designed worksheets and quizzes. Practical sessions take place in a modern well-designed training salon. Learners work on good hairdressing equipment and use a wide range of professional hairdressing products. Tutors demonstrate good practical techniques using head blocks. Learners have ample opportunities to practise these techniques, with good support and guidance from their tutors. As at the previous inspection, RWP is unable to find sufficient clients for learners to work with during some practical training sessions. However, in most cases, there are ample opportunities for learners to practise on clients in their salons and the effect of the shortage has been minimised. RWP is trying a variety of potential solutions and advertising methods to attract more clients.

11. There are effective arrangements to provide learners with information, advice and guidance about learning and work. Learners receive ample information about career pathways in hairdressing by both RWP and their employers. They are encouraged to set high goals for themselves and to commit to long-term learning. For example, learners who have completed an apprenticeship programme receive good encouragement to progress to advanced apprenticeships and a good proportion do so. RWP willingly refers learners who are reconsidering their career options, or whose employment is under threat, to Connexions for impartial support. Where appropriate, RWP also makes good use of its links with local employers to help unemployed learners find employment within hairdressing.



12. RWP has satisfactory arrangements to provide literacy, numeracy and language support for learners. All learners receive an initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy and language skills during their induction period, which accurately identifies any needs for additional learning support. Learners with these needs are offered additional teaching sessions or greater individual support during their off-the-job training session. Most opt for additional help during their off-the-job training, which is always delivered with due discretion. One current learner has until recently received additional teaching sessions that took place away from the training centre at a location and time he chose himself.

13. There is insufficient focus on target-setting during learners' progress reviews. The paperwork used is over-lengthy and cumbersome. During discussion, insufficient emphasis is given to the key activities of reviewing the learning and assessment that has already taken place, and using this to set challenging targets for the next period. In some cases, employers do not attend the review sessions and are unable to assist in planning and target-setting procedures. The review process is not sufficiently well linked to the overall training programme. These issues were apparent during the previous inspection and are also fully described in RWP's self-assessment report. Some improvement action is under way, including modification to the forms used.

### **Leadership and management**

14. RWP applies highly effective quality improvement arrangements to its hairdressing training. It has introduced a particularly well-designed monitoring system to assess progress rates for individual learners at all stages of their training programmes. This system is well linked to quantitative performance measures and targets for staff. Detailed and reliable management information is now widely available and a good range of performance reports is produced. These reports are well communicated to all hairdressing staff. Learners are kept particularly well informed about their own progress. RWP has introduced a highly effective incentive scheme, based on awarding lapel badges for unit completion and good attendance. There is now friendly competition among learners to achieve these awards as quickly as possible. All staff are involved in suggesting and introducing improvements. For example, they have collaborated to produce a full new scheme of work, with detailed lessons plans and good flexibility to adjust the mix of background knowledge and practical work to suit learners' needs. This has fully resolved the lack of balance in the delivery of the programme, which was identified during the previous inspection. There is an extensive programme of observations of training sessions, which concentrates on improving teaching methods and spreading good practices. The quality of teaching sessions has improved from satisfactory overall to good.

15. At the time of the previous inspection there had been significant staff turnover and there was a shortage of hairdressing staff. This has now been resolved, staffing levels are stable and there are good contingency arrangements to cater for unforeseen staff absence. RWP has recently established an employers' forum for hairdressing salon owners to identify future training needs and in the local industry and marketplace. It is also establishing a new internal and external newsletter to further improve its communications with learners.

16. There are fully effective arrangements for internal verification. Learners' work is thoroughly sampled at appropriate stages of their training programme. There are regular standardisation and assessors' meetings. The work-based assessors find these meetings

particularly useful to ensure that they apply consistent and correct standards and that they are fully up to date with awarding body requirements.

17. RWP's staff are consulted extensively during the self-assessment process and contribute significantly to actions in the associated development plan. The current self-assessment report was completed in May 2006. It correctly identifies all of the strengths in the hairdressing training, but overestimates the current effect of some of the previous weaknesses.

18. Equality of opportunity is covered thoroughly in induction. Within the training centre, a wide range of good equality of opportunity related posters is on display. These reflect themes which challenge gender stereotypes, racism and other forms of discrimination. Learners have a good understanding of these issues. As at the previous inspection, RWP takes effective action to improve the commitment of employers to equality of opportunity. It monitors their equality of opportunity practices and has ceased to work with some hairdressing employers that do not give these issues sufficient internal priority. There is an ongoing programme of staff training on equality and diversity.

